



Understanding Tribes through Demographic Perspectives: A Comparative Study among Santal and Sabar Communities of Jhargram District, West Bengal

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Abstract: Scheduled tribes of Jangle Mahal, eastern fringe of Chotanagpur plateau region are socio-economically backward and marginalised ethnic groups. Tribal people accounts 8.6 percent of India's total population. Since, after seven decades of independence, Scheduled Tribes (ST) are still at the margin of society. This study seeks a deeper insight into the demographic situation of the tribal communities. Primary data were collected from 117 and 114 sample houses of the Sabar and Santal communities, drawn from 9 selected villages following a stratified random sampling technique. The result indicates that Santals perform better in education than Sabar community. Both communities have high sex ratio compared to the national sex ratio. The average dependency ratio of the Sabar community is more (47.8 %) than Santal community (42.02 %). Also, the Sabar community show higher Child Women Ratio (284.72), indicating a higher level of fertility than the Santals (235.29). Sabar has a nuclear family system, with average family size of 3.65 and Santals shows joint family system with average family size of 4.59. The unemployment problem is very high among the Sabar community. The study reveals that illiteracy, a greater degree of dependency, and limited access to the mainstream socio-economic activities make the tribal people vulnerable. Collective and coordinated efforts of Govt. policy makers, planners, economists, and social scientists may formulate community specific plan for economic as well as social upliftment of these marginalised groups.

Keywords: Tribal Society, Literacy, Dependency Ratio, Child Women Ratio

1. INTRODUCTION

Schedule tribes are termed as "backward tribes" living in the excluded and partially excluded areas in India (Census-1931). Article 366 (25) defined scheduled tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the constitution". Sabar community is recognised as particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) in India. They belong to the Adivasi Munda ethnic group and primarily reside in Odisha and West Bengal. They inhabit the forested region of Paschim Medinipur and Jhargram district of West Bengal (Murmu, et al., 2024). During the colonial period they were referred to as one of the "criminal tribe" under the provisions of Criminal Tribes Act 1871 (Murmu, et al., 2024). The Sabar tribe includes 1,08,707 population in West Bengal which is only 1 % of the entire tribal population (Census, 2011). They speak in Bengali. They have own admission of traditional drink, called "Handia" (rice beer) (Murmu, et al., 2024). The traditional food of the Sabar community contained varieties of fruits and tubers collected from the jungle, meat of animals hunted from the forest. (Murmu, et al., 2024) Sabar people of Jhargram started losing interest from traditional way of life hunting and gathering practices. Now they are mainly engaged as daily labour work, agricultural labour, fishing, collection of medical herbs, and collection of fuel woods etc. (Ghatak, P. 2013)

On the other hand, The Santals are third largest tribal group of India and largest in West Bengal. Their habitats are spread throughout the West Bengal especially in Paschim Medinipur, Jhargram, Purulia, Bankura, Birbhum and Burdwan district (Ahmed, N., & Tattwasarananda, S. 2018). Jhargram district has highest concentration. According to 2011 census, 5.5 % of the total population belongs to tribal population in West Bengal. Santal community accounts for 51.8% of total tribal population (Census of India, 2011) in West Bengal. They called themselves 'Har', means a man. Risley (1891) pointed out that Santals are also known as 'Saontar' and

'Kharwar'. The traditional occupation of the Santal community was hunting and gathering. Now, their primary occupation is settled cultivation. Many of them are engaged as wage labour and also in different government jobs. The Santal have a rich artistic tradition. Unique architectural designs of houses reflect the social, environmental, religious, cosmological and sense of communality. They have own culture, customs, traditions and way of living (Kisku and Santra, 2017). They have different form of songs and dances for different rituals and festivals. Santal follows many festivals like 'Magh Sim', 'Baha Bonga', 'Saharai' and 'Mahmore' etc. They speak in Santali, belongs to the Austro-Asiatic language group. They have own writing script called 'Olchiki'.

The tribal societies are isolated geographically and socially from the mainstream of Indian society. After seventy years of independence, the Scheduled Tribes (ST) are still at the lower end of the society. The tribal culture and their livelihood is closely associated with nature. (Dey, A. 2015). Forest plays the pivotal role for sustaining the livelihood necessities of tribal community like 'Sabar' in rural areas, forest is like a home to the people (Murmu et al., 2024). The livelihood of tribal people mainly depends on timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) to meet their need of food, fuel, fodder, medicine as well as economic and socio-religious needs (Ghosal, 2011; Shit & Pati, 2012; Dolui et al., 2014; Tripathi, 2016 and Saha et al., 2022, Murmu et al, 2024). To some extent, modernization has influenced Santal community of Jhargram district especially with respect to health practices, agriculture, communication, dress pattern, drinking water, lightning at house etc. (Ahmed, N. 2018). But all the tribal people are still not equipped to accept and utilize the opportunities and facilities extended to them by the government and other non-governmental organisation, (Sachna, P.C. 2013). Most of them live in isolation from rest of the country, often in remote areas; therefore, they don't feel a strong connection with the nation as a whole. The tribal people usually does not show much concern about the future and even some cases, they show opposition or hostility. (Memoria, 1957).

2. NEED FOR STUDY

Even after seventy years of independence, the Scheduled Tribes (ST) are still among the poorest and most disadvantaged groups in society. Although many studies on population dynamics have taken place in the urban and rural sectors of India, but there is a need to comprehend the tribal urges within the context of their own regional environment and culture. The present study aims to thoroughly examine the demographic profile of the tribal society, with special reference to the Sabar and Santal communities, and to identify the problems faced by the tribal society.

3. OBJECTIVES

- I. To examine the demographic profile of the tribal communities in reference to Sabar and Santal communities.
- II. To identify the problems faced by the tribal community in the study area.

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

4.1 Study Area

Jhargram is a newly formed (22nd) district of West Bengal, after being separated from the Paschim Medinipur district on 4th April 2017. The district contains eight (8) blocks, namely, Binpur-I, Binpur-II, Jhargram, Jamboni, Gopiballavpur-I, Gopiballavpur- II, Sankrail and Nayagram. Jhargram district contains 79 Gram Panchayets under these 8 blocks. It has an extension from 21°51'30" N to 22°48'49" N latitude and 86°33'80" E to 87°15'31" E longitude. It has a greater variety of topography than any other district of West Bengal and is also famous for its wooded beauty and topography. The ancient temple, royal palaces, folk tunes and tribal people's culture and tradition are the special attractions of this region. The study area is located on the eastern fringe part of Chotonagpur plateau region, gradually sloping down, creating an undulating landform with infertile lateritic soil (Murmu et al, 2024). The average elevation of this area is 85 metres above sea level; slope extends from south-east to north direction (Murmu et al, 2024). The entire area experiences severe drought conditions. The climate is characterized as warm-humid tropical, falls under the AW type of Koppen's climatic classification. The vegetation cover of the study area is mainly dominated by forest consisting of *Shora robusta* (sal) or by mixed forests. The major rivers of this division are the Kangsabati, the Tarafeni, the Subarnarekha and the Dulong. With an area of 3,037.64 km², Jhargram district has a population of 1,136,548, according to the census 2011. Around 96.52% of total population lived in rural areas and only 3.48% resides in urban areas. 20.11% of the total population belongs to scheduled caste and 29.37% belongs to Scheduled tribes (Census, 2011).

4.2 Database and Methodology

The present study investigates the demographic characteristics of tribal community through the detail inspection on the Sabar and Santal community of Jhargram district, West Bengal. To understand the demographic characters, ethnic composition, sex ratio, dependency ratio, child-women ratio, marital status and family structure etc. have been studied thoroughly from the Primary Census Abstract, India, 2011 and the Primary survey (2019-2024) conducted in the sample villages. An intensive household survey have been conducted with the help of a semi-structured questionnaire. Data has been gathered from 117 houses and 496 persons of Sabar community from Tiakati, Suabansa, Tulibar, Sangram and Purnapani villages. 114 houses and 498 persons of Santal community are surveyed from Antapati, Jharagerya, Tulibar, Birgi and Tamajuri villages. The study follows stratified random sampling method.

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Demographic aspects of Jhargram District

Demographic aspects analyze the key indicators like sex ratio, literacy rate, and percentage of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) population of the Jhargram district and the studied villages. Jhargram district has a total 1136548 Population of which 574747 (50.57 %) is male and 561801 (49.43 %) is female and Sex ratio shows 977 females per 1000 males. (Census, 2011). Schedule tribe and Schedule caste population comprise 29.37 % and 20.11 % of the district's total population.

Table 5.1: Demographic aspects of the Jhargram district

Name of the Blocks	Total Population	Total Male	Total Female	Sex ratio	Child sex Ratio (0-6)	Literacy Rate	% of ST Population	% of SC Population
Binpur - I	156153	78929	77224	978	954	61.32	28.15	25.02
Binpur - II	164522	82654	81868	990	961	62.17	39.95	15.77
Jhargram	170097	85970	84127	979	979	63.60	22.71	14.83
Jamboni	113197	57607	55590	965	960	63.91	28.60	18.10
Gopiballavpur - I	108254	55475	52779	951	953	57.50	34.01	27.18
Gopiballavpur - II	104996	53459	51537	964	940	63.34	23.39	31.00
Nayagram	142199	71537	70662	988	963	55.82	40.01	20.32
Sankrail	115418	58240	57178	982	973	65.01	24.97	18.20
Jhargram (M)	61712	30876	30836	999	1010	80.81	9.85	9.59
Jhargram District	1136548	574747	561801	977	963	62.61	29.37	20.11

Source: Census of India, 2011

5.2 Demographic aspects of the Studied Villages

Table 5.2: Demographic aspects of the studied villages

Community	Name of Village	Total Population	Male	Female	Sex Ratio	Child sex Ratio (0-6)	Literacy Rate	% of ST Population	% of SC Population
Sabar	Tiakati	455	220	235	1068	1323	57.14	76.70	4.84
	Suabansa	572	297	275	926	909	39.16	49.30	0.17
	Tulibar	902	448	454	1013	1262	50.67	42.02	0.55
	Sangram	446	228	218	956	667	15.92	59.19	1.57
	Purnapani	166	81	85	1049	538	58.43	48.31	0.00
Santal	Antapati	335	171	164	959	613	50.45	97.31	0.00
	Jharagerya	308	143	165	1154	1333	50.32	91.88	0.00
	Tulibar	902	448	454	1013	1262	50.67	42.02	0.55
	Birgi	561	290	271	934	941	68.63	76.83	6.77
	Tamajuri	529	283	246	869	692	62.95	53.50	3.40

Source: Census of India, 2011

Demographic aspects show Sabar villages generally have a higher sex ratio than Santal villages. Villages like Tiakati (1068), Purnapani (1049) show a high sex ratio. Whereas, Santal Villages Jharagerya (1154), Tulibar (1013) shows a higher sex ratio, but Tamajuri (869) and Birgi (934) show significantly lower sex ratio.

Sabar villages have lower literacy rates compared to Santal villages. Sangram village (15.92%) has an extremely low literacy rate, other villages Tiakati (57.14%) and Purnapani (58.43%) show relatively higher literacy rate among the Sabar villages. Whereas, Santal Villages generally have a higher literacy rate. Villages like Antapati (50.45%) and Jharagerya (50.32%) have moderate literacy, while Birgi (68.63%) and Tamajuri (62.95%) have higher literacy among all the Santal villages in the study area (Census, 2011). Mukherjee, S. (2017) also found positive trends of the educational level while studying spatiotemporal analysis of literacy rate in Jhargram district from 1971 to 2011.

On the other hand, Santal villages like, Antapati and Jharagerya have very high ST percentages (97.31% and 91.88%), while Sabar village Tiakati has a high ST population (76.7%), followed by Sangram (59.19%). Both communities have strong ST representation in certain villages.

5.3 Age-Sex composition

The age-sex structure shows the distribution of males and females across different age groups. It has a functional relationship between the age composition and components of population change (i.e. fertility, mortality and migration) as well as aspects of family planning and social arrangements (Chandna, 2004). Age composition with 4 broad age groups i.e., 0-18, 18-40, 40-60 and above 60 years for Sabar and Santal communities shown in the table 5.3.

The average age-sex composition of Sabar community in the studied village shows that in the age group 0-18, male population is around 30.70 % and female population is 30.54%, and the female population is about two percent higher than the male. Whereas in the age group 18-40, about 39.03 % and 40.11 % are male and female respectively and in the age group 40-60 there are 22.58 % of male and 21.65 % of female. Above 60 years age group shows, 7.69 % of male and 7.70% of female. High birth rate and better control of disease lead to high birth and high child population. The child population of Sabar community is high due to control of diseases and high birth rate (Murmu et al, 2024). As well as male and female population in old age group (>60 years) is comparatively less due to high mortality rate and the shorter life expectancy (Murmu et al, 2024). (Table 5.3)

In case of Santal community 27.46 % male and 24.93% female are concentrated in the below 18 years age group. The high proportion of children in this community is mainly due to control of diseases and a high birth rate (Murmu et al, 2024). Whereas in the age group 18-40, about 35.69 % and 45.66 % population are male and female respectively and in the age group 40-60 there are 26.49 % of male and 21.67 % of female. Old aged population (>60 years) represent 10.36 % of male and 7.73 % of female. (Table 5.3). Old-aged Santal population (>60 years) is higher (male-3.34 % and female-0.03 %) than Sabar community due to decreasing death rate. Life expectancy of Santal community is comparatively higher than the Sabar community.

Table 5.3: Percentage distribution of population across age groups to the total population of the Sabar and Santal Community.

Community	Village Name	Category	Broad Age groups (years) (Population in %)				N
			0-18	18-40	40-60	>60	
Sabar	Tiakati	Male	27.91	34.88	25.58	11.63	43
		Female	33.33	44.44	15.56	6.67	45
	Suabansa	Male	21.28	53.19	21.28	4.26	47
		Female	18.60	39.53	32.56	9.30	43
	Tulibar	Male	38.89	30.56	22.22	8.33	72
		Female	39.71	36.76	22.06	1.47	68
	Sangram	Male	29.55	43.18	18.18	9.09	44
		Female	30.61	42.86	16.33	10.20	49
	Purnapani	Male	35.90	33.33	25.64	5.13	39
		Female	30.43	36.96	21.74	10.87	46
Santal	Antapati	Male	37.50	37.50	18.75	6.25	64
		Female	31.88	40.58	15.94	11.59	69
	Jharagerya	Male	28.57	26.19	30.95	14.29	42
		Female	36.17	44.68	14.89	4.26	47
	Tulibar	Male	31.82	31.82	29.55	6.82	44
		Female	28.85	36.54	23.08	11.54	52
	Birgi	Male	16.67	37.50	39.58	6.25	48
		Female	8.70	56.52	28.26	6.52	46
	Tamajuri	Male	22.73	45.45	13.64	18.18	44
		Female	19.05	50.00	26.19	4.76	42
Sabar community (Average)		Male	30.70	39.03	22.58	7.69	245
		Female	30.54	40.11	21.65	7.70	251
Santal community (Average)		Male	27.46	35.69	26.49	10.36	242
		Female	24.93	45.66	21.67	7.73	256

Source: Primary survey, 2019-24

5.4 Sex ratio

Sex composition of the population is one of the important demographic characteristics, which can express different demographic analyses (Chandna, 2004). Deviations in the sex composition reflects the basic socio-economic and cultural features of any society. Sex ratio, globally measured as the number of males per 100 females whereas, in India, Sex ratio indicates the number of females per 1000 males in the population. Sex ratio is calculated by using the following formula

$$\text{Sex ratio} = \frac{\text{Number of females}}{\text{Number of males}} \times 1000$$

It is a significant social indicator for measuring the equity between males and females in society. It is assumed that there will be an equal number of males and females in each age group, but this is a rare case because fertility, mortality, migration, economic activities and incidence of marriage, etc., create inequalities in the sex ratio.

Jhargram district has a sex ratio of 977 females per 1000 males. Sex ratio of the tribal community of Jhargram district is 1010, which is higher than the sex ratio of West Bengal (950) and India (943) (Census, 2011). Sex ratio of Sabar community is 1024 and Santal community is 1040, which indicates a higher number of females than males. Mandal, A. K., (2016); Reddy, et al. (2019) also observed high sex ratio in the tribal societies of India.

This is perhaps due to higher mortality experienced by males than females, which leads to widening the gap between life expectancies of females and males in the study area. Social status of women in the tribal society plays an important role as they help the men in all walks of life, and women are considered as assets, as the groom's family pays the bride price at the time of marriage. Tribal people do not worry about the dowry issue with the birth of a girl child.

Table 5.4: Comparison of Sex ratio among Sabar and Santal Community

Community	Total Male	Total Female	Sex ratio
Sabar (Primary Survey)	245	251	1024
Santal (Primary Survey)	244	254	1040
Jhargram District (Census, 2011)	85970	84127	977
Jhargram District (Tribal community) (Census, 2011)	19215	19410	1010

5.5 Dependency Ratio

Dependency ratio is an important measure for studying the population structure and economic dependency of any region. This measure specifies the number of dependent or non-working populations to working populations. Three age groups are considered i.e. 0-14, 15-60 and above 60 years for this study. 15-60 years age group is considered as a working population. Whereas, population below 14 and above 60 years is considered as young dependents and old dependents. Dependency ratio (DR) is further categorised into young age dependency ratio (YADR) and old age dependency ratio (OADR).

The dependency ratio is calculated by using the formula.

$$\text{YADR} = \frac{\text{Total population 0 – 14 years age}}{\text{Number of working population}} \times 100$$

$$\text{OADR} = \frac{\text{Total population above 60 years age}}{\text{Number of working population}} \times 100$$

$$\text{DR} = \frac{\text{Number of dependents or population of Non – working age group}}{\text{Number of working population}} \times 100$$

Where,

- **No. of Dependents** = Population aged under 14 + population above 60
- **Working Population** = Population aged between 15 and 60

Among all the sample villages, Tiakati (Sabar village) shows the highest dependency of 66 % and Birgi village, inhabited by Santal community recorded the lowest dependency of 28.8 %. The average dependency ratio of the Sabar community is 47.8 % which is quite higher than the average dependency ratio of India, reported as 46.6 % in the year 2024. On the other hand, the average dependency ratio of the Santal community is 42.02 % which is a lower than the Indian average. This ratio indicates less financial stress on the working people and more economic stability for the Santal community.

This is also pointed that these measures may not provide an accurate overview because not all the individuals in the working group (15-60 years) are employed, same as not all the individuals in dependent age groups (0-14 and above 60 years) are economically dependent.

In the study area, Sabar children start working at an early age as assisting their parents as helping hands in different works i.e. household responsibilities, taking care of siblings, in the agricultural field and throughout the growing to harvesting season, livestock rearing etc. Also, the old people of Santal community participate in some kind of economic activity like non-timber forest product collection and different agricultural activities. A certain proportion of the working-age groups are not economically independent. because some respondent of Santal community continuing their higher studies in their working age. on the other side, poor health condition, and due to less job opportunities, some Sabar people in working groups are not working.

Table 5.5: Dependency ratio of the Sabar and Santal Communities in the Sample villages

Community	Name of the villages	No. of Dependent Population		No. of Working Population	Total Population	Total DR	Young age DR	Old age DR
		0-14 years	60 + years	15-60 years				
Sabar	Tiakati	27	11	50	88	76.00	54.00	22.00
	Suabansa	21	7	62	90	45.16	33.87	11.29
	Tulibar	38	6	96	140	45.83	39.58	6.25
	Sangram	25	9	59	93	57.63	42.37	15.25
	Purnapani	18	7	60	85	41.67	30.00	11.67
Santal	Antapati	38	12	83	133	60.24	45.78	14.46
	Jharagerya	24	8	57	89	56.14	42.11	14.04
	Tulibar	26	9	61	96	57.38	42.62	14.75
	Birgi	15	10	69	94	36.23	21.74	14.49
	Tamajuri	15	12	59	86	45.76	25.42	20.34
Sabar Mean		129	40	327	496	51.68	39.45	12.23
Santal Mean		118	51	329	498	51.37	35.87	15.50

Source: Primary survey, 2019-2024

5.6 Child Women Ratio

Child-woman ratio used as a measure of fertility, also known as the fertility ratio. It is used demographically to indicate the burden of children in a community and identify fertility rate disparities. It is defined as the number of young children aged between 0-4 years per 1000 women of child-bearing age between 15-49 years. The formula of CWR is as follows,

$$CWR = \frac{\text{Number of children up to 4 years of age}}{\text{Number of women aged 15 - 49 years of age}} \times 1000$$

Table 5.6: Child Women Ratio of the Sabar and Santal Communities in the Sample villages

Community	Village Name	No. of Children (0-4 years)	No. of females (15-49 Years)	CWR
Sabar	Tiakati	8	22	363.64
	Suabansa	7	26	269.23
	Tulibar	13	42	309.52
	Sangram	8	28	285.71
	Purnapani	5	26	192.31
Santal	Antapati	9	39	230.77
	Jharagerya	5	28	178.57
	Tulibar	7	28	250.00
	Birgi	6	32	187.50
	Tamajuri	9	26	346.15
Sabar Mean		41	144	284.72
Santal Mean		36	153	235.29

Source: Primary survey, 2019-2024

A comparison of the child-women ratio between Santal and Sabar communities shows that in the Sabar village, Tiakati has the highest CWR (363.64), indicating a high level of fertility. In contrast, the lowest CWR (178.57) is found in the Jharagerya village, inhabited by the Santal community. Sabar community shows a high fertility rate with an average CWR of 284.72 whereas, Santal community shows relatively lower fertility and a decrease in birth rate with an average CWR of 235.29. The disparities in fertility rate among Santal and Sabar communities is due to their cultural differences, economic conditions and access to the healthcare system.

5.7 Marital Status

Marital status indicates a person's legal relationship status. Marriage rates tend to vary, with some villages (like Birgi and Tamajuri of Santal community) showing a higher proportion of married individuals (65.96% and 59%). While, in the Sabar village, Tiakati has more unmarried (59.09%) individuals. The percentages of the widowed population are relatively low across most of the villages, Purnapani and Sangram village inhabited by Sabar community, showing the highest percentage of widows (10.64% and 9.78 %). Divorce or separation is not reported in any of these communities among all the tribal villages (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7: Marital Status of Sabar and Santal Communities in the Sample villages

Community	Name of the villages	Marital Status (No. of population)			Marital Status (% of population)			N (Total population)
		Married	Un-Married	Widow	Married	Un-Married	Widow	
Sabar	Tiakati	34	52	2	38.64	59.09	2.27	88
	Suabansa	49	35	6	54.44	38.89	6.67	90
	Tulibar	60	69	11	42.86	49.29	7.86	140
	Sangram	48	35	9	52.17	38.04	9.78	92
	Purnapani	48	36	10	51.06	38.30	10.64	94
Santal	Antapati	67	58	8	50.38	43.61	6.02	133
	Jharagerya	49	36	4	55.06	40.45	4.49	89
	Tulibar	50	39	7	52.08	40.63	7.29	96
	Birgi	62	28	4	65.96	29.79	4.25	94
	Tamajuri	49	32	2	59	38.55	2.41	83

Source: Primary survey, 2019-2024

5.8 Family structure

5.8.1 Family type

Family is an important basic social element. It is defined as an association of husband and wife with or without their unmarried children. A family plays significant roles and functions i.e. psychological, religious, socio-cultural and economic in the society. In the study area, there are mainly two types of families; The nuclear type or nuclear pair consists of a head and spouse with or without unmarried children and Joint families i.e., head with or without spouse with married son(s) or daughter(s) and their spouses Or, head and spouse with married brother(s)/sister(s) and their spouses. (Chakravorty and Singh, 1991; Niranjana et al., 1998). Generally, Sabar and Santal families are nuclear type. Overall, 70.94 % Sabar families are found to be nuclear types and 29.06 % families are joint families. Whereas, 68.42 % Santal families are nuclear type and 31.58 % are found as joint families. Among all the tribal villages Sangram village inhabits by Sabar community have highest number of nuclear families (90.48 %) (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8: Family structure of Sabar and Santal Communities in the Sample villages

Community	Name of the villages	Family Type				Average Family size		
		Joint family		Nuclear family		N (Total house)	Total population	Average family size
		No.	%	No.	%			
Sabar	Tiakati	5	25	15	75	20	88	4.40
	Suabansa	6	25	18	75	24	90	3.75
	Tulibar	11	37.93	18	62.07	29	140	4.83
	Sangram	2	9.52	19	90.48	21	93	4.43
	Purnapani	10	43.48	13	56.52	23	84	3.65
Santal	Antapati	10	34.48	19	65.52	29	133	4.59
	Jharagerya	4	18.18	18	81.82	22	89	4.05
	Tulibar	6	28.57	15	71.43	21	96	4.57
	Birgi	10	43.48	13	56.52	23	94	4.09
	Tamajuri	6	31.58	13	68.42	19	85	4.47
	Sabar	34	29.06	83	70.94	117	495	4.23
	Santal	36	31.58	78	68.42	114	497	4.36

Source: Primary survey, 2019-2024

5.8.2 Average Family Size

The average family size represents the number of persons residing in a household, including parents and children. The formula to calculate average family size is as follows;

$$\text{Average family size} = \text{Total population} / \text{No. of families}$$

The average family size can differ based on cultural practices, economic, and social factors. India had an average family size of 4.44 people in 2021 (Global data, 2021). In the study area, both tribal communities have a smaller family size compared to the national level. Sabar and Santal communities have an average family size of 4.23 and 4.36. Antapati village, inhabited by the Santal community, has the highest value of average family size 4.59, among all the studied villages. Whereas, Purnapani village recorded the lowest average family size of 3.65. High mortality rate, child mortality and poor economic conditions are responsible for the smaller average family size of the Sabar community.

6. MAJOR FINDINGS

- Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes population comprises 235,506 (20.11%) and 333,848 (29.37%) of the total population, respectively, in the Jhargram district. Percentage of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) population is much higher in all the studied villages.
- Santal communities seem to perform better in education, with more consistent and higher literacy rates, indicating better educational access or awareness. Sangram village among the Sabar community lags in educational attainment.
- Sex ratio of Sabar community is 1024 and Santal community is 1040 this positive sex ratio is due to higher mortality of males and also, the social position of women in the tribal society.
- In terms of dependency ratio Tiakati village, inhabited by Sabar community shows the highest dependency of 66 % and Birgi village, inhabited by Santal community, recorded the lowest dependency of 28.8 %. The average dependency ratio of the Sabar community is 47.8 % whereas, of the Santal community is 42.02 %
- Sabar village, Tiakati has the highest CWR (363.64) indicates a high level of fertility. However, the lowest CWR (178.57) is found in the Jharagerya village, inhabited by the Santal community.
- Generally, Sabar and Santal families are nuclear type. Overall, 70.94 % Sabar families are found to be nuclear types, whereas, 68.42 % Santal families are nuclear type.
- Santal community shows relatively higher family size than the Sabar community (4.23). Antapati village, inhabited by the Santal community, has the highest value of average family size 4.59, among all the studied villages. Whereas, Purnapani village recorded the lowest average family size of 3.65.

7. CONCLUSION

The study area is located on the outskirts of the Chotanagpur plateau, exhibits undulating terrain with infertile lateritic soil. These adverse geomorphological and hydrological conditions make the life and livelihood of tribal people harder (Murmu and Maiti, 2021). High tribal concentration with high sex ratio, less literacy rate, high dependency ratio, high child-woman ratio indicate social backwardness. The studied community are in different levels of social, economic and educational development. Also, the socio-economic status has not improved. The Sabar people have to struggle more to meet the necessities of life. Limited opportunities for leisure lead to a different attitude toward life, which differs from that of the mainstream population. They are indifferent towards the attainment of education; development of socio-economic conditions, and this apathy results from the difficulty in geo-physical conditions (Murmu and Maiti, 2021). Governmental efforts are not always effective because the policies and programmes and the requirements of the tribal people do not always converge. It is time to rethink the improvement strategies for socio-economic and holistic development of the tribals. It would be beneficial if the Government make different tribal specific plans and programmes, which is best suited to them.

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